

In God's Army - Saint Francis Xavier



by Father Cyril Charles Martindale, S.J.

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Introductory

"I have heard our great modeller of men, Ignatius, say that Francis Xavier was, at first, the stiffest clay he had ever handled." - *Polanco*

In all literatures the *roman d'un gentilhomme pauvre* has been a favourite. Everybody loves, even when they smile at, the shabby, gallant figure cavalier, condottiere; troubadour, if you will; highwayman, even; each an adventurer in his way; a romantic, honourable, unworldly worldling, assisted by little save his own wits, his merry humour, his resource, his pluck. Schoolboys adore d'Artagnan, with his threadbare cloak, and great battered leather boots, his faithful sword, and his indomitable musketeers. Soon after schooldays, how irresistible is Cyrano de Bergerac somewhat, of course, of a Gascon mauvais sujet; reduced almost to the pawning of his baron's torque for the price of the necessary crust; and, after his packed life of fighting, scholarship, gallantry, and self-sacrifice, carrying into God's presence-chamber nothing save his plume but *that, sans tache*. Nearer to us are these foolish, gallant gentlemen, never quite broken by the hard knocks of Fate, than the few great show-conquerors of history, having it all their own way from the beginning, just as the starry knights of fairy tale - Lohengrin, Saint George - are somewhat less human and less lovable than a Don Quixote. What if the Spaniard did at times run atilt at windmills? For him, at least, it was a genuine fight and a hazard; while from the start, one knows, the poor dragon never has his chance against the magic lance and helmet, and the red-crossed buckler.

I would like to argue that in the life of Don Francisco de Xavier y Jaxu, the brilliant, unmoneyed, proud, tender-

hearted, indomitable Basque, is all the charm, all the dash, all the high colour of the heroes of romance. Them we love, knowing them to be creatures, in the main, of fancy; here is one whose story is established on the rock of human history, while the glory which bathes him is no dream-halo, but divine.

In Navarre - 1506-1525

"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain:
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!"
- *Rabbi Ben Ezra*

Education, we keep hearing nowadays, must keep the children happy. In practice, this seems to mean that they must be kept amused. For richer children, luxuries; for poor, at least amusements. Hence "schools of play," "revels" carefully rehearsed, the methodical merriment of dances antiquarianly exact. Drudgery and grind are to disappear; children are spontaneously to rush to the schoolroom, itself a palatial haunt of higher art. The very toys are decorative, the very grammars entertaining. Not for a moment am I to discuss the utility of all this. Only I maintain most stoutly that the sum total of good character, and therefore of happiness - I do not say of immediate pleasure - is not by one degree the greater for all this than in the days when education was an austere affair. That practical psychologist, Mr. James (and not he alone), has preached the panegyric of that forgotten virtue, poverty. Education once could be, and often was, sober to the verge, and over the verge, of sternness even in the wealthiest setting - nay, at the very Court; and though violent reactions most likely followed often enough upon the heels of emancipation, yet it may well be thought that a certain high essential value, a sound and penetrative quality, was infused into the child, which survived the period of lawlessness and revolt, and saved him throughout from the effects of that "trashiness of fibre" we

so anxiously and so often diagnose in the pleasurably nurtured children of today.

Xavier's education was austere, his childhood happy, his character firm.

His home, and therefore his name, reached him through his mother. Dona Maria de Azpilcueta was the daughter of an impoverished gentleman whose little castle, like our northland border-towers, defended the Franceward frontier of Spain in the valley of Baztan. Through her mother, Dona Joana de Azuarez, her distant ancestry found itself linked with the Kings of Navarre and Aragon alike. Thus it was that the royal fortress of Xavier came to Dona Maria for *palacio*.

To reach it, you abandon the softer Basque-land scenery for the sun-scorched territory of the Ebro. The ground was rough and stony; roads were wretched; mules made a difficult ascent to the village of Xavier, with its enormous view of bleached sierras and parched soil. The scene was all palest blues and browns; hills and plains alike burnt biscuit colour; hills shadowed with dim browns and greys where ravines broke the rocks, and plains streaked with the dazzling white of torrent-beds. Dim pine-woods set a blue shadow here and there, but above it all spread the Spanish sky, dancing with sunlight, so tingling with heat that the very blue faints into colourlessness. Such is Xavier in the summer; the winters are terrible.

The fortress, though small, had its frowning dignity - a moat, a battlemented wall, a drawbridge leading to a stout-built gate-house; then the wide court round the keep. The keep was a gloomy cube flanked by four turrets, and pierced by loopholes only. Enormous stones fayaded it, and, sculptured with blazons, were wedged round the pointed arch of its one grim door. Even in the central court another tower faced

you, for a final pouring down of molten lead and boiling liquids on the invader. Narrow winding passages within the walls showed iron-clamped doors opening into the living-rooms. A single loophole lit the chapel.

Here the sixth child of Don Juan de Jaxu, councillor of the King, Lord of Xavier and Ydocin, and of Maria de Azpilcueta, his wife, was born on April 7, 1506, and named Francisco.

The marriage had taken place between 1475 and 1480; three daughters and then two sons had been born. The family fortunes steadily increased. Navarre was at peace with Castille, and Magdalena, the third daughter, became maid-of-honour to the Catholic Queen, Isabella; while to the eldest boy, Miguel, was offered a post as page at the Court of Madrid.

Juan and Maria had rebuilt the parish church of Xavier, and added an *abbadia* where a priest was to live in community with two or three other persons, and to recite the Daily Office. On Tuesday in Holy Week this recitation was to be peculiarly deliberate, they ruled, in honour of the Passion. During it Francis was born. This church haunted his boyish fancies. Over its font he could see hanging his baptismal robe. In it High Mass and solemn vespers were daily sung; the *Salve Regina* sanctified each sunset. The *abbadia* was all but monastic in its rule of life, imposed by the Founder and Foundress, who, in their deed of gift, preached a regular sermon to all its future occupants. Cards and hunting were forbidden, but fishing and gardening allowed; pious books were to be read at table; women under sixty were excluded. Minute regulations insure the decent saying of the Office. Austere piety was traditional in the fortress. Saint Jerome, the fierce recluse; Saint Michael, the soldier-angel, were its patrons. The Holy Trinity was a mysterious and unusual devotion in the family. Above all, a Crucifix, found long ago

(in the thirteenth century, when the first Azuarez de Sada went to Xavier), hidden, from the Moors doubtless, in a secret hollow of the wall, daily drew the inhabitants to kneel before its terrible face of torment. In a crowd of relatives where vocation to the priesthood or religious life were constant, Francis was remarkable for nothing but his skill in all manner of athletics.

When he was six, years old, disaster began to haunt his family. In 1512 war broke out between Castille and Navarre. France and the Papacy entered the conflict, Ferdinand of Castille standing for Julius II, who had opened hostilities against Louis XII, and was answering a Gallican by an oecumenical council. Poor King John of Navarre, more French than Spanish, driven from his chosen neutrality to define his position, inclined to France, and was forthwith excommunicated by a Bull, probably forged, brought by the Duke of Alba. Many of the Jaxu family transferred their allegiance to Castille, while Don Juan tried to couple abstinence with loyalty. He failed. In June, 1515, Navarre was annexed, the lands of Xavier sold, and in October the poor man died of the shock. Next year the caste, so to say, was changed throughout. New Kings had everywhere succeeded to the throne; a revolution was attempted. Many of Francis's relations were involved. The fortress of Azpilcueta withstood the Spanish onslaught for a considerable time; Cardinal Ximenez, when it was taken, razed it to the ground. After Azpilcueta, the Jaxu castle fell. Then it was Xavier's turn: the outer wall and gate-house were demolished, the moat filled up, and three of its towers fell beneath the pick. A Castillian agent was installed: the lands of Xavier, Jaxu, and Ydocin were harried; rents no longer came in; the family sank rapidly.

One more effort. In 1520 Navarre attempted a final revolt, much of the Castillian garrison having been drawn off. Thus,

in Pamplona, only a handful of Castillians remained. A band of French hurled themselves upon the little town. A breach was made. Alone in the breach stood its Captain, Ignatius of Loyola, powder-blackened, but not to be sent running. Up the slope stormed the French and the Navarrese, among them Juan and Miguel Xavier. Francis, only eleven years old, had been left behind, like David; else his might have been the shot which brought Ignatius down. Pamplona was taken, and Ignatius with it. But the campaign went against Navarre, and, at the head of a long list of exceptions to the amnesty proclaimed on December, 1523, by Charles V, stood the names "Miguel de Xavier, Juan de Azpilcueta, brother of Miguel de Xavier," and, a little lower, "Valentin de Jaxu," all of them condemned to death. They escaped, however, and for two more years held out at Fontarabia, till in 1524, on the yielding of that garrison, their pardon was pronounced, and, crippled, but with unstained honour, they retired to their shattered properties.

Such was the setting of the boyhood of Saint Francis. An austere religion; a fortress-home, brown among burnt-out hills; a space of hunting and running and bathing in mountain torrents; the echo of battle ever in his ears; eviction, impoverishment, demolition of dear places; one long lesson of detachment from all save personal honour and loyalty to his King.

But just as the personal pride of the Xaviers could not any more soften into mere complacency or self-satisfaction in present opulence, so neither did it shrivel into a morose brooding over lost glories. The whole Xaverian history had been one of deliberate ambition. So was it now. In many a document we can watch them at work, rebuilding their fortunes with the tenacity of beavers restoring their broken dam. Francis, clear that war was a precarious business, decided to make a career for himself by letters; and since

the Church promised higher emoluments and positions than the law, he will choose to take the tonsure. University life will also be a necessity, and nothing but Paris can do justice to his destiny. Anticipating, I will say that at Paris Francis was determined to abandon nothing suggested by the rank he claimed. He had no least intention of admitting that the Xaviers fell short of their associates. His elder brothers, with truer perspective, are by this time careful, saving, doing their subordinates work, enlarging themselves by a field's worth, an orchard's worth at a time. Francis is extravagant, and has to write home, and often, for moneys hard to be supplied. Dona Maria is anxious. Ought not Francis to be recalled? But his sister Magdalena, a Poor Clare now at Gandia, proves herself to be, in her cloister, a woman of wider view and imagination than the chatelaine of Xavier. At all costs Francis must finish his education at Paris: his extravagant life is but a phase; he is bound, the nun insists, to make good. Cut down his expenses he did, and was, indeed, forced to do so; yet he left no stone unturned to obtain the full legal verification of his pedigree and its patents to nobility. His career in the Church, too, must be distinguished, and he begs his uncle, who belongs to the Cathedral Chapter of Pamplona, to obtain for him some benefice at that place. Not for some years - not, in fact, till Francis's own views were changing - did his brothers seriously attend to this. But in the September and October of 1535 the official recognition of the Xaviers rank was proclaimed, and on August 4, 1536, the *Corte-mayor* of Pamplona declared, in the name of Charles V, that "Don Francisco de Jaxu y Xavier was *hijodalgo* of noble and gentle birth, according to the four stems of his paternal and maternal genealogy."

It were a weakness - today, at any rate - to suppose that titles as such mean anything: it is affectation, and in fact downright unscientific, to pretend that breeding counts for

nothing. The supernatural may no doubt disregard the natural substratum into which it comes, but mostly it does not. The Breviary itself constantly displays an almost naive interest in the stock from which Saints spring. There is no doubt that "ancient wealth," regarded by AEschylus as the best patent of nobility, implies generation; of freedom from sordid preoccupation, of practice in government, of possible width of outlook and action on a large scale, and of taking one's self for granted. All this strongly moulds the soul. One thus intrinsically fashioned will probably feel ashamed of falling beneath his post; more, by a certain security as to his essential value, he will be able freely to dispense with the trappings, the *mise en scène*, which are his due, yet must more eagerly be snatched at by those whose title to them is less recognized. Yet he will take, and take rather heedlessly, it may be, what he wants, because he feels he deserves it. This breeziness of method and the conquering disposition which this implies will carry such a man on far, and reveal themselves whatever be his line in life. So, too, in the case of Francis. The narrow, the cooped and cabined, were instinctively displeasing to him. He must travel, and have life at its largest. A Court, a cathedral, a Commandership-in-Chief, must be for him. In effect, far wider horizons shall be his. Spiritual viceroy of Kings and Popes, he will know himself, even so, Legate of a yet higher King. Whole continents shall be his allotted territory, but his undisputed empire is to be the hardest of all to gain and keep - the rule, that is, over the innermost of men's consciences and souls.

At Paris - 1525-1536

"For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act tomorrow what he learns today:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.
Yea! it was better youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made. . . ."

I

In 1525, then, Francis left for Paris, being nineteen years old. He entered at the college of Sainte Barbe, where he paid, as *camériste*, both board and lodging. His servant, Miguel, was a Navarrese of bad character, destined, in fact, to turn out something of a villain. A moneyed master, ready for vagabondage of manners or morals, would have found in him a skilled accomplice. Sainte Barbe stood in the southern part of the Latin Quarter, separated by narrow lanes from other colleges all about it. Into one of these, the veriest sewer, poured the drainage of the College of Montaigu, a reactionary, semi-monastic backwater, in the opinion of go-ahead Ste. Barbe, and sharply ridiculed by Rabelais. Stringent regulations were laid down, intended to coerce into good behaviour the peccant and pugnacious undergraduate; useless were they, as even in our own time, when, though far more rarely, the youth of our Universities elects to raid the town. In Paris the most savage holdings-up, barrings-out, armed ambush and attack, were constant in these black lanes, with their jutting buttresses, yawning pitfalls, and overhanging windows. Terrors hurtled from

above; terrors gaped below. Worse than this, a torrent of immorality poured its foetid flood into this cess-pool of the town.

Personal pride, especially when reinforced by poverty, is in such circumstances a strong succour. It was strong in Francis, and, though slow in being alchemized, provided him from the beginning with a fund of self-respect, and readiness for self-discipline and control, which in time would render the more spiritual virtues at once easier to believe in, to understand, and to practice. Meanwhile it was not difficult for Francis to see that the indiscriminate vice of his fellow-students was beneath him, a taint, a slur. He refused to condescend.

But pride is insufficient. Clearly as a motive it is not the highest. Even on its own level it cannot be trusted. It instills a self-restraint which tends to hold a man aloof from all he deems contemptible. But not all things always will he so esteem. A "gentleman" has been defined as one who knows "when to draw the line." But to draw a line need not imply a wholesale taboo. There are, for instance, intrigues which arouse in a man the primitive lust of the chase; there are conquests which are flattering. There are, too, the devouring onslaughts of that white flame of passion which seems, to the sinner, to purify what else were doubtless sin. Lancelot was never "wanderingly lewd," yet it was he, not least, and Guinevere, whose tragedy worked havoc in Arthur's Court and kingdom. Therefore, although a man may proudly, even scornfully, sweep away from his life all that is sly, leering, coarse, or cynical, yet may he be carried violently away from his chosen pedestal by the torrent-force of passion, or even charmed there from by subtle self-deception and by intellectual chicanery, and even by a mistaken reading of the laws of chivalry. Beyond all this, there are moments when the very proudest, the surest of himself, feels the

world crumbling beneath his feet. There are moods of loneliness, of disgust with life, of impish perversity, of sickly craving, nay, of downright rebellious animality, when all human resolution or trained instinct is swamped. Of all enemies, the temperamental mood is the most dangerous by far. Unaccountable in its advent, bewildering in character, blind in its issues, it shatters its victim's plans. Whence does it rise? Who knows? Yet let us brutally defeat our rising vanities. Few men are "cases," or interestingly dual personalities. Physical equilibrium even in the least degree disturbed will suffice to create "moods," a liver attack, a digestion interfered with. . . . Anyhow, at such moments it is Principle, and nothing else, which saves a man, Principle held to blindly, obstinately, by a bulldog will; an ultimate awareness that right is right, despite the endlessly sophisticated arguments that fill the brain; despite the sick and rainbow-radiant mists that set the imagination a-swirl; despite the imperative command of the body. But so to hold is not in the power of any will save helped by grace from God.

How serious, then, was the risk run by Francis is immediately obvious, though it has his own emphatic declaration. He asserted roundly that in his time the moral tone of the University was shocking, and that his chosen associates were in no way above its level. He used, he frankly owned, to accompany them on their nocturnal expeditions, the more readily since his own professor shared them. Nor can we in truthfulness omit what, from the point of view of Francis's development, is the most important point of all, that not supernatural convictions, nor even the human self-esteem we spoke of, kept him from sin, but good down-right fear of the appalling maladies he saw rife around him. When his professor died miserably thus, Francis received an important shock, and his self-control, which, after two years of precarious integrity, was running out, received a fresh

support in the person of a new and clean-lived tutor. Persons always meant much to the vivid sympathies of Francis, and the reinforcement which this new influence received by the apparition in his circle of Peter Favre, the young Swiss shepherd-genius, was all-important. Favre knew by experience the struggle Francis was ever more consciously enduring; and while on his side he was to thank God for having let him meet Xavier and share his room, Francis, even before Peter's death, would insert the name of that gentle, sincere, and lovable man in the litany of the Saints. Almost light-heartedly, then, so far, had Xavier guarded a treasure he never lost. In the most impossible situations of his later life, amid unparalleled audacities of behaviour, he will walk scathless, untouched (save once, by a plot of proven calumny) by the slightest breath of scandal, and, since purity is creative, inspiring all around him the virtue he possessed.

II

Hitherto the issue had been clear. I do not think Francis ever had any illusions as to the essential wrongness of yielding to the clamour of the animal within him. Doubtless in many a sophisticated student of that time the Renaissance had implanted perversities of imagination, pagan ideals, and unbelieved-in arguments for vice. Doubtless a halo had been cast, for some, around sin, such as for many a decadent of our own or the past generation has been lit up by a yet newer paganism and a Christless mysticism. In the sturdy Basque brain, however, these morbid germs had not been suffered, by wholesome heredity, environment, and training, to insert themselves; nor yet in the sicklier sentimentalism of our northern, half-educated youth could the Spanish realist have found congenial nutriment. To Francis Xavier the branching road was manifest; he could choose the path of sin should he will to run in it, or he could suffer himself to be

cajoled, half drowsed, to stroll or saunter down it. Humanly speaking, this he almost did. But that it was the path of sin he would not have disguised from himself.

Far subtler was the intellectual temptation which beset the brilliant undergraduate.

He was only nineteen, after all, when he went up to Paris! And Paris at that time was seething with excitement. The feverish winds of the Renaissance tore madly down those black and narrow lanes, setting the dust and straws a whirl and the crass pools rippling, carrying on their brilliant wings strange perfumes from Greece and even Syria to intoxicate young brains and make the fancy reel. Above the "Gothic silhouette" of old Paris glittered the gold and marble vision of Athene's city. Boys came away from their professors classes drunk with the new knowledge, and these professors of Sainte Barbe's were among the foremost of their time Cordier, the grammarian; d'Estrebay, the Latinist; Buchanan, the Scotch poet; Fernel, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and litterateur, and so packed were Fernel's classes that the professor's pulpit had to be dragged out into the open. Francis took to this new atmosphere like a duck to water. In 1526 his literary studies were over. In 1529 he passed a second examination in philosophy and the "sciences," and as Bachelor could now teach beginners while still at his own more advanced studies. In 1530 the further examination for the Licentiate was passed. The extraordinary brilliance of his fellow-lodger, Favre, was a continual stimulus, though in truth he needed none. Besides his own unquenchable ambition, he was nervously eager to shine in his philosophy professorship, which he now accepted in the College of Dormans-Beauvais.

But in the midst of this intellectual effervescence one element was of supreme importance. As Bobadilla, one of

Xavier's future friends and associates, pithily put it: *Qui graecizabant, Lutheranizabant* ("Who loved Greek, loved Luther"). The Collège de France, on one side of Sainte Barbe, was full of innovators. In that of Fortet, Calvin, from 1531, worked quietly. Kop and Cordier were, or were to be, at Sainte Barbe itself. The King's sister, Margaret of Navarre, had grouped around herself a constellation of the unorthodox. Later on Francis regarded with horror the spell these new ideas had begun to cast upon him. On March 25, 1535, he was to write to his brother John a regular *apologia* of his orthodoxy. John had heard that Francis was flirting with heresy, and that Ignatius, with whom Francis then lived, was as bad or worse. If Francis really did play with fire, his fingers were scarcely burnt. He is furious with his calumniators, so much so that, forgetful that his conversion was yet young, his earlier editors have mutilated his letter. He is deeply incensed against these "few ill-natured and perverse men. I wish I knew who they were, that I might pay them back as they deserve. I can't do this, because they present themselves under the mask of being friends of mine. God knows the mortification I experience at being unable to recompense them according to their works. My one consolation is, *Quod differtur non aufertur*." (That which is postponed is not dropped). How strange seems the circle of events when we perceive that Francis entrusted this letter to Ignatius de Loyola, ill, and having to return for a while to Spain. Thus to that very Juan de Azpilcueta, whom he had once encountered in the breach of Pamplona, Ignatius handed over this letter from his brother Francis! In it Francis goes out of his way to prove that so far from Ignatius being guilty it was to him he, Francis, owed his severance from these ill influences. "In my inexperience," he wrote, "I did not perceive the real character of my bad companions. Today, the heretical opinions of these persons are a mystery to no one, and I would give anything in the world never to have associated with them."

An absurd myth was floated in the sixties of the past century that Xavier became a Protestant at heart, and to the end retained an un-Catholic width of view and flexibility of action. But for Ignatius, it was argued, France had found the brilliant, gay Reformer that she needed. No; Francis could never have been a Reformer in the sense of Luther or of Calvin. His irrepressible sense of humour would sufficiently have saved him from that. Unmarried, he might have made a less genial Thomas More. Taken up by Margaret of Navarre, he might have become a kindlier Erasmus. If so, I imagine he would in any case, like Erasmus, have come to look with horror at his coquetries with heresy, once she was unmasked, and that his keen annoyance with the shortcomings of contemporary conservatism would have been tempered by time. His brain was far too vigorous not to perceive, as is now so clear, that the Reformation was in reality removing the whole foundation of historical Christianity. Through this mental crisis Xavier, then, undoubtedly did pass to emerge, hence too, victorious.

Xavier therefore has revealed himself, surely, as altogether human, altogether intelligible, and near ourselves. His was no overwhelming nobility, as Borgia's was to be, or Aloysius Gonzaga's, or Kostka's; his was that excellent manner of breed which has given to our own country so many sound politicians, courageous and gallant officers, and equitable judges. England has been staffed throughout, one may say, by the sons of those large houses where neither enervating wealth nor crippling poverty have prevented education being generous, hardy, ambitious, yet not insolent. These men, like Xavier, go mostly in youth to University, Army, or Navy. He, like them, experienced all that is incidental to developing body and brain. Xavier, again and again, is a type we know and prize; his experiences and fights were those of the utterly ordinary man. His very victories, when in an enormously important part of conduct he determined to

control himself, were carried off with no mystic or sublime weapons, but from prudential considerations, and because he was modest and friendly enough to allow himself to be influenced by good men. Even so does a high percentage of our contemporaries, despite the customary lie which asserts the opposite, keep itself wholly free, or mostly free, from graver moral lapse. Alien, by his sound instinct, to the genuinely corrupt and lewd, Xavier gives the lie, too, to the false oracles that to live pure is to lack experience, not to have seen life, to be but half a man; or that equilibrium is to be maintained only by regulated indulgence. In him, whatever of Sainthood he was to acquire, was to be prefaced by an ordinary human life, lived well; an ordinary human instinct made the best of.

Just, then, as we neither flatter Francis for any mysterious exemption from trials incident to all normal adolescence, so neither shall we scold him nor others if for a brief space their new-hatched notions create a hubbub and make them fractious, unruly, and impatient of authority. Most men at adolescence, or soon after, go through a certain intellectual upheaval. To those whose brain is even tolerably active it may be a period of very considerable excitement. To those exceptionally gifted it may be perfectly volcanic. In these, ideas seem to run rapidly up into their awareness, following some fine and fiery, quickly evanescent, train of thought, and then to explode with all the starry brilliance of a rocket. Consequences, analogies, values, flare into parti-coloured splendour all about them; the very stars, fixed hitherto in the solid firmament, principles firmly riveted as sun and moon for the ruling of day and of night, seem to spring from their sockets, so to say, and to reel in a wild geometry of interweaving flame. Life is reborn day by day; the world is incessantly recreated; to yield unalterable assent to any dogma, or rigid obedience to any law, seems like suicide, a deadly blow dealt to the emancipated, probing, soaring,

exploring spirit of man. Youth rediscovers for itself the truth of platitudes once felt as stale and flat; or it improves upon them, corrects them, interconnects them, and transcends while it retains them. It feels itself linked with all the past, and yet to be not stationary. It speeds through all the possibilities of the present, and feels itself to be preparing the future. Above all, it is aware that all this is happening for the first time in history; that nothing has ever been quite like itself; that at last and undoubtedly the Prophet has come into the world; that in this little unknown room at Oxford or Innsbruck or Harvard, or in this garret of some London back-street, is living at last the one who, through no merit of his own, yet none the less infallibly, shall heal the universe.

Yes! for all this may go with a most sweet innocence. The youth's whole being, when you meet him, may be an incarnate *Non Nobis*. The frank expression of a bubbling egotism may be, as someone said, the truest modesty. At least it is not that sickly inner life which shrinks from external intercourse lest it provoke the comparison which subconsciously it fears. It is no philosopher - Narcissus, on his knees before his own intellectual perfections till he finds he has let life go by, and dies in isolation. And even if along with the blossoming of thought comes a good deal of simple vanity - well, vanity is not pride. There is an added legitimate delight in a good thing just because it is your property. And what if you deem it to be your discovery? There is a boyish "swollen head," as grey growlers call it, which isn't a bad thing. A man is being born, and is learning to walk on a new-discovered earth. He will never do anything unless he thinks he can do more than he can. The boy feels a delight in putting forth his strength. Perhaps he does so too often, too noisily, perhaps at other folk's expense. Well, let him! The delight is delightful, and may never come again. Oh, the churlish curmudgeon who would

snub it into the commonplace! The "large draughts of intellectual day" go to the head, I know: the tiniest sips, to some heads. Yet the light, as God very well saw, was good, and didn't stint it; and wine is good, albeit Noah was unlucky. But even he learnt wisdom by experiment, and wouldn't have wished the world to take to total abstinence. Total abstinence in thought is indeed not edifying. It is doubtless true that a certain number of young men, and even women, are so taken up with athletics and falling in love that they have no time for anything else; yet a little thought, and much emotion, is liberated by even these. Far worse, there is an apparently increasing quantity of people who, critics of games rather than performers, and *flaneurs* in erotics, never read anything whatsoever, or at best the story-magazines or the papers; and of these, parts only; and that, cursorily and without appeal to reflection or even memory, so that the stage itself ceases to appeal to them; they cannot "follow" a play, they hie them to hurricane-paced cinemas or nightmare revues. In these, of course, thought has not even a chance of germinating, or perishes forthwith for lack of sustenance, or in the chilling air. Hence allusion means nothing to them; comparison is impossible; they cannot supply a fact, and are helpless to cope with any notion, and their neighbours are too shy to say anything in such company which might savour of showing off. Hence the petrifying dullness of so many dinner-tables. Hence the modern reluctance even to "take a walk." Yet, even in these, even in these, there is at adolescence a certain commotion in the mind, a certain simmering, very likely to be drugged or choked by life, yet full of possibilities while it lasts, if dealt with wisely. At this point then, too, Xavier's development coincides with that of all living men, and observe his miraculous good fortune that, at the right moment, he met the right Man.

It is our singular custom to continue the education of both sexes beyond the closing gates of boy and girlhood in any chosen direction other than that of religious thought. A volume might be written on this subject. It remains, there is no after-school education of the *religious* mind. Doubtless retreats are doing something, when they take this fact into consideration. Study clubs are doing something, too, in regard to the contact between the Catholic life and the social and political life of a man. Yet, on the whole, Catholics provide - and God knows with what difficulty - good schools for our leading classes, anyhow, up to adolescence. We turn our boys and girls out into Universities or other training-plots, and there, while guiding their steps in the preliminaries to whatever career they choose, or in liberal education generally, we leave them, religiously speaking, uncatered for at the very moment when the alert intellect is dealing eagerly with whatever comes its way, unhelped, unpiloted. Idle to say they know their Catechism, they "learnt their religion" at school. But their mind has changed: every fact is newly envisaged, newly dealt with; the whole reaction is new, the products are other. Even when not ill-interested in their beliefs, they risk being just *uninterested*. They may not go away, but they just don't go at all. But, in any form of life, not to go is to grow atrophied and paralyzed. The spiritual life just dies. Doubtless mere head-interest is not enough. To be "interested" in religion, but unspiritually, is to reduce one's faith to the level of one's own intellect: to treat it as a subject one's brain can adequately deal with, thereby insuring its mishandling by the erratic, half-fledged wits, its crippling, and perhaps thus, too, its death. But, on the whole, what is needed by our generation, and by any generation, at its adolescence, is not suppression, not snubs, not ridicule, not sheer disregarding, but an endlessly patient and tactful guidance, at once imaginatively sympathetic, intellectually capable, and spiritual. Francis Xavier found such a guide in Ignatius

Loyola. May he make it his business, in gratitude, to pray that many such another be given to our very unshepherded young flocks today!

Conversion and Convalescence - 1528-1540

"Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

"And I shall thereupon
Take rest, e'er I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour to endue."

Men are, after all, the most important force in life, not arguments; magnetism, not coercion. Sword and syllogism alike go down before soul-contact. That is perhaps why Christianity is not in chief a philosophy nor a rule-book, but is Christ. Certainly, with the entry of Ignatius of Loyola into Xavier's life the great change came.

I

In 1528 Ignatius had come to Paris, and was an extern scholar at the very respectable College of Montaigu. He was not particularly popular, even among his compatriots. Middle-aged, shabby, unkempt, limping, he frankly begged his keep, and swept out corridors for a pittance. Too reserved for the vulgar, deliberately *declassé* in the eyes of gentlemen, even when, like Francis, they were poor enough - to all he seemed perverse and unintelligible. His person was

roughly handled, his room was "ragged." In 1529 he transferred himself to Sainte Barbe, and, by strange chance, was made to share the room already occupied by Xavier and Favre. Apparently Xavier was asked to help his very backward fellow-countryman in his studies. He objected strongly, and shuffled the dull job on to the gentler Favre. He must have been present when Ignatius was on the verge of a public flogging; the acquittal seemed to make the business no less discreditable. In short, Xavier frankly disliked Ignatius. He laughed at his way of life. He answered so flippantly when Ignatius broke in upon Francis's flamboyant development of his own ambitions with the words, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul," that one less unselfishly sensitive would have found his affection frozen and his lips for ever sealed. Francis jeered at Ignatius when he passed him in the streets, and jeered, too, at the younger students from Alcalà, Laynez and Salmeron, whom the report of Loyola's virtues had drawn to Paris. But Ignatius laid resolute siege to Francis, and what Ignatius meant to do he always did. "I have heard our great moulder of men, Ignatius, declare," Polanco was to write, "that the stiffest clay he ever had to handle was, at the outset, Francis Xavier." Yet he conquered. He definitely admitted Xavier to his "Company" before either Salmeron or Laynez.

I expect the Rubicon was crossed when Xavier, reduced one day to downright pennilessness, due apparently not least to the expensive verification of his patents of nobility, was forced to accept the loan of some coins Ignatius had begged. That was an obligation which must generate definitely either hate or homage. After this, Ignatius began to collect pupils whose fees should fill Xavier's pockets, and in return Xavier ceased to haunt the heterodox.

In 1533 Favre went back to Switzerland, and for seven months Ignatius was left alone with Francis. During those months the miracle was worked, none knows how. When Favre returned, early in 1534, he found Francis an altered man. He had abandoned his dreams of ecclesiastical and even of scholastic eminence; he had forcibly to be kept to the professorial post where his success was ruffling his new-born humility. He prayed; he loved his poverty; he did penance. With Favre, ordained priest that year, Bobadilla, Rodriguez, Laynez, and Salmeron, he offered himself to follow Christ, with Ignatius for guide.

Noble dreams beset these men. They allowed themselves three more years of Paris life to complete their theological studies, but of a Paris life spent in chastity and poverty. Afterwards, in 1537, they would meet in Venice; from Venice they vowed to journey to Jerusalem; there they would live and evangelize the Gentiles, or, returning, would fling themselves at the feet of Christ's Vicar, and beg to be sent by him to carry Christ's name among Turks and infidels and to the ends of the earth. On the Feast of the Assumption, 1534, the triple vow was sealed at the altar of the ancient Montmartre crypt where Favre had offered Mass. Imagine what passion of prayer, resolve, and renunciation poured up that summer morning from the historied hill where Ignatius and his six Companions had made Communion! Yet of that early dream Xavier alone would realize the outline. From the *Exercises* which followed Xavier emerged a hero.

The months ran by; the Companions were now nine; the autumn of 1536 arrived. To reach Venice at the appointed hour, the final examination, with its consequent title of doctor in theology, would be sacrificed. Other sacrifices Xavier had already made. His titles of nobility were complete; he relinquished them. The Canons of Nostra Sefiora del Sagrario had unanimously elected him to an

empty stall. Wealth and career were doubly open to him. He renounced them, abandoned Paris, and began the journey which was to end with his life. He left his University; but its memory will haunt him to the end. Twelve years he had lived in it, and he was only thirty. All that happens to a man between boyhood and maturity had happened to him there. All the crises of body and brain and spirit, of temptation, of grace, and of conversion, he had there passed through. Many who had not suspected themselves of sentiment marvel to discover that one stone of Oxford has come to mean more to them than all the capitals of Europe. Memories, emotions, hopes, cling for them around the grey spires and the willow-trees, not to be disentangled. All was new then; everything was beginning; friendships were different; work and play were meaningful; all the future was one great promise. "Of the infinite dream little enough remains." For Francis, the future was utterly other than what Paris foresaw; but he never forgot, never regretted, and never thought trivially of Paris.

On January 8, 1537, the nine reached Venice, and found Ignatius awaiting them.

For the next three years Francis entered on a curious interspace in life, during which his existence seems depersonalized, and his whole story typical rather than individual. He assimilates himself to his companions, and they, to all religious enthusiasts of their time, even as these, copying, in the flush of their conversion, the types best known to them, revert for a while to the Middle Ages. As certain novices appear to lose, for a space, all personal characteristics, all sense of age, preference, period, sex, all background, even all objective save the moment's work, so absorbed are they in one or two tremendous notions, or, it may be, in the sense of one supersufficient Comradeship, so these Jesuits-to-be fuse, as it were, for the time, with those

who then were setting the standard and tone of Christian enthusiasm. Saint Gaetano had recently founded the Incurables Hospital at Venice; Saint Geronimo degli Emiliani had worked there since; thither Francis went, speaking his bad Italian, trading on no quality or degree, making beds, bandaging sores and wounds, digging graves and burying the dead, washing beggars rags, and living on alms. In torrential rain, fasting (for it was Lent, and from sheer necessity); tramping eighteen miles one Sunday through floods at times breast-high, on a crust of bread in the morning and a few pine-cones gathered and chewed at night; sleeping where best they could, yet losing that very sleep for joyousness, singing Psalms and exulting in God, they tramped down Italy and reached Rome; and after a space (for the war, soon to break out between Venice and the Turk, made Jerusalem impossible) they returned to the north. On June 24, 1537, Francis was ordained priest, and said his first Mass at Vicenza in the late autumn. At Bologna he awaited directions from Ignatius, who was back at Rome, and, says Domenech, at this time his whole conversation was about the Indies and of preaching there. Earlier, a nightmare had haunted him. He would appear broken beneath the weight of an Indian, and would arouse his companion by his cries. God, he felt, too, was asking perilous labour of him, and in his enthusiastic acceptance he would awaken the scared Rodriguez by his cries of "More! yet more!" But when Ignatius called him to Rome two illnesses had made him unrecognizable. It was clear he would work no more. He was given two months of life. He remained quiet, happily for him. Ignatius is accused of heresy, in part by the villain of the piece, Miguel the Navarrese, who already in Paris had climbed Ignatius's window at midnight, bent upon murdering the man who had ridded Francis of him. This tale, though, has been told. But neither was Francis to be left in peace. He had heard confessions; he directed souls. A wretched woman, his

penitent, lived on in sin and was detected. She denounced Xavier as her accomplice. Here, as in Loyola's case, a Providential chance revealed the guilty, and Francis was acquitted. This horrible experience put him on his mettle. He reappeared, visited hospitals and prisons, and preached at San Luigi dei Francesi. He discussed with Ignatius the Rule of the future Institute, and when the rest of the Fathers went abroad on missions, ill-lettered Ignatius kept him behind as secretary. Francis as yet lacked suppleness of action. He drove his principles to death. Poor Father Estrada complained bitterly; he was always writing to Rome and getting no reply. "Whose fault is that?" answered Ignatius. "Why, Signor Master Francis's. His fingers are numb with the cold, and it never seems to occur to him that fire was made to warm one's hands at."

Thus, amid quiet duties and sober ascetic industries, in an almost conventual air of demure pleasantries, the first chapter closes.

II

Quietly the first chapter closed, and quietly the second began, and then quiet was, for Francis, for ever finished.

In 1539 John III of Portugal ordered his ambassador at Rome, Don Pedro Mascarenhas, to examine whether the "Companions" would be fit folk to evangelize his dominion of the Indies. Mascarenhas interviewed Ignatius, who was ready if the Pope approved, which he did. Whom should Ignatius send? Two at most could go. Rodriguez, ex-scholar of the King of Portugal at Sainte Barbe's, was an obvious choice. He set off for Lisbon on March 5, from Civita Vecchia, with most of Don Pedro's staff. Bobadilla, intrepid, reckless, rather violent for home missions, was sent for from Naples. He arrived, half paralyzed by sciatica, and forthwith

relapsed. But the eve of the ambassador's departure had arrived. He could not wait, but was determined to have his second man. Of the first Companions only Salmeron and Xavier were at Rome. Salmeron was due for Ireland. Ignatius, ill in bed, sent for his secretary. Ribadeneira, a successor in that post, relates what passed.

"Xavier," said Ignatius, "you know that by order of His Holiness two of Ours have to start for India. We had chosen Bobadilla, but he is too ill to go, and the ambassador can't wait. You must go."

"Certainly," said Xavier. "At once. Here I am. *Pues, sus! heme aqui!*"

He had less than a day for his arrangements. He mended a cassock and some under-linen, packed them into a bundle with his breviary and presumably visited the Pope. He then wrote out three documents, containing, first, the approbation of whatever the Constitutions, yet unwritten, should contain; second, his own vows as a Companion; third, his vote for Ignatius as Superior. He then received directions from Ignatius concerning correspondence, and next day, March 16, 1540, left for Lisbon.

Thus, with no fanfaronade of farewell, no noise or lamentation, Ignatius cut off from himself, for ever, as he quite well knew, his dearest and nearest friend; and Francis, for the sake of Christ, left behind him all country and people, friends and enterprises, and the man who had called him to God's service. Ignatius and Francis each loved the other better than all the world. Each gave the other up, the moment God spoke. Here, then, is the high deed of very gallant gentlemen, done as it should be done.

Wherever, as at Bologna, the memory of Xavier's visit two years previously was fresh, his advent was announced. Crowds poured out to meet him, besieged his confessional, tearfully escorted him forth, like Saint Paul, upon his way. Deep disappointment awaited him at Parma. Favre had that very day left it for Brescia, to return in a fortnight only. Mascarenhas could not wait; the friends never met again. Accidents, not unusual for that period, diversified the route. A groom got carried away by a river in flood. He was saved, the ambassador said, by Xavier's prayers. Xavier said, by the ambassador's. Other incidents left less room for these reciprocal courtesies. Don Pedro's aide-de-camp, who had quarrelled violently with his master, went ahead to prepare the night's lodging. Xavier, anxious for peace, galloped after him; luckily, it turned out, for the man's horse had bolted, had pitched his rider over a declivity, and, falling after him, had broken his own neck and pinned the unlucky man beneath him. Francis freed him, and got his way. . . . Again, snowdrifts rendered the Alps all but impassable. The ambassador's secretary, treading where all seemed solid, sank, and disappeared over the edge of a ravine. Deep down, a torrent roared. Horror-struck and helpless, the men gazed at one another, peered into the blackness, and abandoned hope. Meanwhile Xavier, who, despite his illnesses, could still trust muscles and head, had scrambled down the precipice, found the wretched secretary hooked by his clothes to a rock, and hauled him up again. But not chiefly by these sensational performances did he win the hearts of the caravan. His thoughtfulness and kindness, his ubiquitous good offices, above all, his untiring cheerfulness, made it a pleasure, they said, to have him with them. He liked seeing to the horses, and was as genial with the grooms as he was at ease and unaffected with Mascarenhas. One of his younger companions frankly declared, later, how young, wealthy, free from supervision, he had been enjoying life considerably too well in half a dozen countries. He had

racketed across half Europe, and needed and feared confession more than anything in the world. Francis Xavier, enormously interested in all he had to tell of, listened to his harangues by the hour. Imperceptibly, the boy found his point of view was changing. Fascinated by Francis, he reconstrued life. Long before Lisbon was reached, he had made his general confession, and, said he, "for the first time in my life I understood what it is to be a Christian." Foreshadowed here are all the special characteristics of Xavier's developed sanctity.

In Lisbon they arrived in June, 1540.

Rodriguez, there since April, was expecting an attack of quartan ague. In his joy to see Xavier he decided not to have it, and they worked together during the eight months before the fleet could sail, effecting a not quite transitory reformation in the court. To the delighted John III. the Jesuits owed their first establishments, not alone in Portugal, but in Brazil, Ethiopia, the Congo, and India, though at first he wished to keep both priests in Portugal, so popular and effective were they. Paul III. and Ignatius left the decision in John's hands, Ignatius hinting at a division of forces. Why not keep Rodriguez? Thus it was settled. Nor could Xavier have been happy at Lisbon, packed as it was with the strangest visitors - ambassadors from Ceylon, from India, from the Congo; with negro priests and a black Bishop; with princes from Malabar and Cape Comorin. A certain Cingalese kinglet, wishing to insure the inheritance to his grandson, sent a gold statue of the boy to John, and in Lisbon its coronation was by him pompously performed. Moreover, the Pope's briefs conferring full powers and a papal nunciature upon Francis had arrived, recommending the missionaries to the good-will of the kings and lords of the isles of the Red, the Persian, and the Oceanic seas, and especially to David, King of Ethiopia.

March, the month of sailing, came. Francis said his last farewells. "May we meet again in the next life," he wrote to Rome. "As for this one, who knows? Rome and India are wide apart; the harvest is great. Each will have work enough where he is. But, whoever of us shall first enter into the other life, and *there finds not the brother whom in the Lord he loves*, let him pray Christ our Lord to give us all the grace to meet again in glory."

The solemn moment came. All Lisbon used to watch the yearly departure. Convents used to escort the distant fleet with a "month's mind," the Mass of the Angels, said *pro navigantibus*. Yearly, too, since Vasco de Gama's example, travellers would meet in the chapel of Our Lady of Nazareth, in Belen, a suburb of Lisbon. This year Paul III had attached indulgences to a visit there, for the garrisons due for India, and the faithful who should pray for them. Last confessions were made; wills were drawn up. A Belen convent carried down a pulpit to the shore, and for the last time Xavier's voice was heard in Europe. On April 7, 1541 (for winds had kept the fleet locked there within the Tagus) he embarked. It was his birthday, and he was thirty-five. To the blare of trumpets and chant of hymns, the thirty-five lumbering, blunt-nosed, transport vessels heaved out to sea. Europe faded in the blue.

In the East

"Come, my friends,
Tis not too late to seek a newer world,
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows: . . .
That which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."
- *Ulysses*

The journey was appalling. For two months Francis was incessantly sea-sick. The fantastic vision of the East had filled the ships with a heterogeneous mob of emigrants, among whom were hundreds of that scum of which Portugal was only too glad to be rid. These lived in a foul and murderous promiscuity. The steerage reeked, physically and morally. After Sierra Leone, the fleet fell into the "calms," and lay in sweltering heat for forty days. Sudden gusts set it tossing, but not progressing; to the return of nausea a hideous epidemic was added. No sanitary appliances of any sort were obtainable. The food putrefied, the doled-out water was warm and crawled with life; the ships were an inferno. Xavier, himself staggering with weakness, was all in all to the panic-stricken cursing crews. His food, his clothes, his very cabin, he sacrificed. At Mozambique, "the graveyard of Portugal," they were forced to winter. No Port Said of our day equals its moral turpitude. Here, too, Xavier gathered around himself a motley and adoring troop - soldiers, slaves, sailors, and natives. He fell sick, and, bled to utter exhaustion, recovered from a delirium in which his whole talk had been of the beloved children he was serving. It were idle to detail what was the most horrible year of his life. On May 6, in the

evening, the coast of India was sighted, and, with their background of the Ghats, the palms of Goa waved green.

As utterly impossible were it adequately to outline even Xavier's missionary life. The mere list of places that he visited and tribes to whom he preached would wearisomely overflow our limits and bewilder the brain. Yet in some way an idea of what he did should reach us, else the heroicity of his labour fails to touch our imagination. I will at least indicate in its four main divisions the history of those ten years of work.

His headquarters were naturally Goa, and there he remained from May to the end of September, returning thither at intervals. With the exception of its Franciscan Bishop and his devoted friends, nearly everything was against him. Even they had nearly despaired. The Christianity of the colony was all but a mere farce. In the background a sensual and bloodthirsty idolatry still lurked. Natives were sold into a ferocious and degrading slavery, for trifling sums, on the very steps of Cathedral and Government House. The meanest Portuguese scullion regarded himself as their natural lord. Private houses became mere brothels, the churches mere bazaars. In all India, scarce two or three priests preached; save in the capital, the huge diocese went almost without Mass. No law of marriage or of business contract survived. Officials either were the worst transgressors, or wrote frantic letters home, which still survive, denouncing the prevalent corruption, for which they were speedily murdered if their appeal became known, or recalled if it did not. Bankrupt in money and morals, despite a certain simmering upkeep of the gayer functions of religion, the colony was in so shocking a condition that again and again Francis cries in agony that the Europeans are the worst enemies of themselves, of the natives, and of their faith.

From September, 1542, to December, 1544, lasted the mission of Cape Comorin. Thirteen times altogether will Xavier, the worst of sailors, make this pirate - harassed journey of six hundred miles and more. Here he devotes himself to the pearl-fisheries with their Christian Paravar population, lost in a jungle of the worst forms of Hindu superstition, knowing nothing of Christianity save some prayers. Tutikorin was his headquarters; here he began to form his catechetical method, and create the very language in which to convey to his neophytes the new truths. Here, too, he first encountered Brahmins, the problem of caste, the necessity of philosophical alertness in one who would convert these dreamers, and of asceticism in one who would face these seeming saints. One Brahmin only he converted; though as to the commoner folk, his arm fell weary with baptizing them. In his hut of planks and palm-leaves he makes but a brief stay. No village of that wide district but he visits and revisits, establishing catechumenates. He organizes a whole police, a whole code; he all but suppresses the arack-swilling which rots these poor folks nerves. He treats in person with, and turns back, the marauding Badagas; is sent for by the Rajah of Travancore, and, in a month's stay among his piratical subjects, in that pestilent region of dysentery, malaria, and elephantiasis, he makes and arranges for an immense number of converts. In 1545 the mission contained probably some 30,000 faithful. He returned via Cochin to Goa.

December, 1544, to September, 1545, with a brief stay at Goa, was given to the mission of Ceylon. The Cingalese pearl-fishers wished to follow the example of their Paravar comrades. The "massacre of Manar" annihilated this infant Church. "Ah, Ceylon, Ceylon!" he was once heard to cry. "How much Christian blood thou shalt cost!" During this episode Francis created a problem for his biographers. He appealed frankly to the support of the Portuguese fleet for

the capture of the persecuting centre, Jaffnapatam, and the forcible enthronement of a Christian Rajah. Similarly on the mainland he thoroughly approved of the introduction of the Inquisition. We may briefly observe that when we rebuke these and the like events, partly we are asking Francis to think 300 years ahead of his time; even more, we are probably misconstruing the data, especially as regards the Inquisition. Everybody approved of it in theory. Its personal and individual procedure was what in certain definite localities was unpopular. As to the admission of force, undoubtedly Portugal considered itself, and was considered by Xavier, the predestined conqueror of the East. Undoubtedly the King and even his people felt they had the *duty* of introducing Christianity together with their armies. Modern neutrality (which really is due less to respect for liberty of conscience abroad than to indifferentism at home) would have been quite simply unthinkable to them. They believed that to "compel them to come in" was feasible, and if feasible, obligatory. That the subordinate officials, out merely to make money, behaved shockingly by the natives, Francis was the first to cry aloud, and the King, to whom he cried it, the first to hope to rectify. Moreover, Francis was right in asking protection, even armed, for his neophytes. To give up making Christians, or to support them when made, or to establish a Christian King, were the only alternatives to persecution. Francis could be energetic and even stern; but of his personal sweetness and endless self-sacrifice no one doubted. Frankly, for the time little could be done in the island. From his missions in Cochin, Negapatam, and San Thome, he already heard Malacca calling him.

From September, 1545, to December, 1547, he hovered around that distant peninsula. Malacca was then undefeated by the rivalry of Singapore, and was the key to the Far East. In its atmosphere of sensuous indolence Xavier lived, as usual, in his palm-leaf hut, and slept on the ground, his head

on a black stone. At first his whole effort was to brace the Christians into some semblance, at least, of self-discipline. Nowhere did he work harder, nowhere with less results. The insidious soft air sapped his bases. But you will observe how, as Paul did, Francis studied the trade-routes, and, imperially minded, sought for diffusive centres of action, like Philippi, and it was at Malacca he gathered his first real knowledge of the Chinese Empire. From Malacca he started for the precious group of "spice islands," Amboina, just west of New Guinea. Storm, and pirates and channels labyrinthine with reef and sand-bank escorted him on his way to a population of the low Papuan type, whom he pursued into their mountainous recesses, through jungles whose damp air swarmed with insects and reeked with the clove. Only by loud singing could Xavier draw these timid creatures from their huts. The head-hunters of Borneo, Sumatra, and elsewhere, the cannibalism and insane immoralities of Ceram, for instance, failed to quell his hope, while never deluding his judgment on the present. Spaniard and Portuguese, circling the globe in opposite directions, and meeting in these seas, had decided to keep each to their Archipelago, Philippines and Moluccas respectively. This year storm, famine, epidemic, drove the Spanish fleet down into the Moluccas. It was a whole mission-field for Francis, and how glad a one! In the rival nation he meets his countrymen.... It is now he writes that line of self-revelation, when he tells his brothers at home how, from the letters they send him, he has cut out their signatures, and carries them about, with his formula of vows, upon his heart. Thus, "through the multitude of the business" came the "dream" of what he had left, and amid the crowding nationalities of his travels the man felt himself still lonely. June, 1546, to April, 1547, he spent in the North Moluccas, Ternate, Tidore, Moretai, Riao; always in volcanic activity, the mud-fountains, explosions, dust-clouds of these places made them in repute a perfect hell, with which the brutal character of their

inhabitants was in keeping. All that was possible was done to keep Francis back. He went, and his work was one long consolation. He knew that, however brutalized, yet for them Christ had died. Each soul was as precious, then, as was His Blood. Thrice shipwrecked, his possessions lost, more than once starving, attacked by the Mohammedans, forced to hide from the natives for several days in the bush, his stay there was pure happiness. "I cannot remember being happier anywhere else, nor more continuously. . . . These islands ought to be called the *Isles of Hope in God*." Long afterwards he will repeat that his three months in Moretai were the happiest in his life, for never had human help been so utterly denied; never had he been so alone with God. He returned to Malacca, having left wherever he had passed a memory such that he was called, sufficiently for all to recognize, the *Padre Santo*. But as on his outward voyage his imagination had been fired by what he heard of China, so now Japan for the first time dawned fully on his dreams. No phenomenon is more ascertained in Xavier's life than that of second sight. His knowledge of the death of Peter Favre about this time seems otherwise inexplicable. Anyhow, many other cases are as well evidenced as anything can be. Thus, after his declaration of the Portuguese victory over a native tribe in the River Paries at 9 a.m. on December 4, 1547, while he was preaching in panic-haunted Malacca, nothing could persuade the folk he was not infallible. The detailed stories of his miracles are fascinating, and have a certain homely *cachet* peculiar to themselves. The evidence for them, treated once as though homogeneous, varies, however, from the irrefutable to the historically worthless. Father Brou's sober evaluation of it renders his criticism of the unscientific attacks of Mr. Dickson-White, in a notorious volume, very telling. The more cautiously we accept the sensational, the more boldly we can assert the substantial residuum. Xavier's miracles are undoubted, because, unless we assume them, we have effects without cause the

tradition, the conversions, and the eye-witness. The earliest Jesuit and ecclesiastical critics were as rigorous as could be wished. In the childhood of a Church these signs have, indeed, always "followed them that do believe" and preach the Catholic faith. Else they neither happen nor are claimed.

January, 1548, to May, 1549, was spent in India. Some of the Jesuits there, accustomed to Ignatius, immovable at Rome, serene, working through others, ever at his desk, accustomed, too, to their regular hours, meals, and, above all, siesta, could not put up with the whirlwind activity of Francis. . . . Like some moderns, they could understand neither the exigencies of the Basque temperament nor the work of pioneering. But Xavier's activity was never feverish nor self-deluded by a futile multiplicity of unfinished, ill-assured enterprises. The whole of this year is spent on revisiting Cochin, the Fisheries, probably Kandy, and in establishing the work there in train. His organization of the prisons, hospitals, leper settlements, his development of the College of Saint Paul at Goa for the formation of a native clergy, his elaborate negotiations with Rome, Lisbon, and the local officials, display a masterly hand and a grasp of details which no imperial view of the wider issues, the universal horizon, could confuse. Add to this devouring energy, which to those unprepared to copy it, might seem alarming, the tenderest, keenest affection for persons and places. His pathetic delight in letters from home; his prostration once when the mail came and contained nothing from Ignatius for him; his whole-hearted welcome of anyone from Europe; his enthusiastic joy over new recruits, make it plain that if everyone fell so promptly in love with Francis, it was because of the spontaneous, irrepressible affection with which he met them. Everyone . . .? Well, shall I say that those very few who did not love Saint Francis could scarcely (as to my reading) tolerate him? To Saint Francis no one

could remain indifferent. A few held out, almost hating him. Most gave in at once, hands down.

Certainly his methods were refreshing. In dealing with difficult cases, his one policy was what he called "going in by their door in order to come out by his own." He "talked navy" with sailors, tactics with soldiers, commerce with the merchants. His knowledge of astronomy was new; on the decks of ships, during evening strolls, he fascinated his companions by odd information about the stars. "Where is this extraordinary man?" asked Diogo de Noronha, a fellow-passenger. He was dicing with a notorious rake. "That, a saint?" cried Noronha, who, though bluff, was a person of ideals. "He is a priest like the rest." At the first halt Xavier disembarked. Where was he going? Noronha sent a man to spy. He returned, thoroughly upset. "Let Noronha come." He followed, and found Francis, in a palm-grove, in an ecstasy of prayer. . . . His audacities take our breath away, and seriously flustered his contemporaries. At Goa no one, one may say, lived correctly in the married state. Xavier, meeting the worst offenders in the street, stopped them, made friends, ended by asking himself to dinner no formalities; why might he not look in at once . . .? He came. The nervous host looked anxiously to see how he would take the company the servants. Francis was charming to everyone, and said nothing. The Portuguese, relieved, invited him again. "And how are your sisters?" Xavier would begin; or he would ask to see the children, and then their mother ... or he refused gallantly to taste a morsel till he should have been introduced to his hostess. Our wonder is that he was not knifed a dozen times during his first stay in Goa. But the rather crude temperament of the Goanese welcomed these sanctified impertinences enthusiastically; he nearly always got his own way. His overwhelmingly clear view separated right and wrong with razor-clean stroke; that done, he was no prude nor Pharisee. On his way to Ceylon a

notorious gambler was on board. Xavier's presence seemed to be the signal for him to lose. He lost, first, every penny; he staked his baggage, and lost. The ship rang with his blasphemous uproar. "What," said Francis, who was saying Office below, "is all that noise?" He was told. He took out a handful of coins. "Give him these," said he, "and tell him to try again. This time he'll be luckier." The sailor laughed, played again, and won back everything. Stupefied, he came to Francis, confessed, and lived (as the witness, an old soldier, tells) like a Christian ever afterwards.

You will observe that Francis took these paths of pleasantness only when his psychologist's eye saw that he must move by them or by none, though it is perfectly true that these anecdotes might be capped a score of times. It is certain that he used again and again to watch, for instance, the soldiers at their gambling, and once, when they thought that decency demanded them to cease, on the padre's approach, he deliberately told them not to stop enjoying themselves; they weren't meant to behave like monks. When, however, he had to deal with Brahmin and other ascetics, he set no limits to his abstinence. At Goa he would dine out constantly, and praise the cooking, the crockery, the cook. In Buddhist monasteries he out-fasted the most rigorous of the pagan ascetics, to whom eating in the European priest would have been a scandal. Herein Saint Paul was again his model. Similarly, his mind changed entirely as to the expediency of having a learned clergy in India. He had thought at first that the simpler, the less bemused with theology, his recruits, the better. Later, he wrung his hands over the knowledge running to waste in Europe, the vapourings of philosophers in Paris. They were needed, he was convinced, a hundred times over to argue with the Brahmin and the Bonze. It may be doubted whether the Aristotelianized brain has the slightest chance even of starting to deal with or create ideas as does the Hindu.

Buddhism, superficially like some of the trappings of Christianity - dazzlingly so to the uninstructed traveller - baffles in reality even the beginning of argument on Western lines. Still, we see Francis's magnificent first principle - that you must fight your adversary or win your friend on his own ground. Rapiers cannot cope with bombs, nor can you bully a man into belief.

Connected with this was his most modern-minded preparation for his mission to Japan. Again, no idea of swooping like an Archangel from the blue, ready to sweep aside all that "the heathen in his blindness" worshipped, in order to offer him in place a Bible or a *Summa* to swallow whole. First, the most careful study of Japanese religions, close interrogation of Japanese students, and, indeed, the conversion and ordination, after prolonged instruction, of three Japanese young men. Later, the learning by heart of Saint Matthew's Gospel, and the writing of it out in Japanese; the translation of the Commandments, Creed, and Christian prayers into that tongue. All that courtesy, all that toleration could devise, all that modern scientific methods could reasonably suggest, Xavier foresaw and carried out. Here is no mad missionary, jangling a bell down the street, calling out unintelligible formulae, pouring water on to astonished natives, and then leaving them to apostatize from what they have never believed. Yet such has been the picture painted by those, whose interest it was, of Francis Xavier.

Do we not perceive in this the difference between the priest who is a man of the world and the priest who is worldly? The latter is, I own, detestable, nowadays especially. In Francis's time there was, in a sense, scope for great prelates. They could take their position with an air. Now Bishops no longer order their tombs at Saint Praxed's, and perhaps just as well. But the imitation of a bad thing is surely doubly damned!

Leaving that, let us say that Francis, in his extreme personal poverty and abnegation, was essentially a man of the world. He had family, looks, physique, University training, and infinite *savoir faire*. Who shall reproach him for making use of it all? The Cure d'Ars was other than Saint Francis. We love him, too, but with a different kind of love. Extreme innocence, simplicity, unlettered naiveness, incredible aloofness from the interests of what, for all but one in a thousand men, means "life," may quell and even charm the soul into submission. Still, for the "approach," Francis's method, be a man but Saint enough to use it, is at least the more attractive, and, under God, not less successful. For it were folly to forget or disguise that Francis was a man a-brim with God. In all his irrepressible boyish gaiety, his chaff, his absurd enthusiastic methods, his canny devices, his work, his penance, he looked out upon the world, himself, and his own action, as through a glass of God.

In May he started for Malacca, and arrived for once not having been sea-sick, and in the highest spirits. He was *sure* of Japan . . . it was his Promised Land. He talked of emptying other missions to supply its needs; he wrote half - summoning Rodriguez. . . . Suddenly the skies clouded. These vivid temperaments have quick and keen reactions. A body bruised and buffeted matters little if the soul be serene. Real martyrdoms are in the mind. Francis suffered his first scruples. Was it, after all, self-will that was taking him to Japan? Then in that Chinese junk, endlessly dilatory, save when, as more than once, pursued by pirates, he saw Chinese idolatry close and constantly, and for the first time. To Francis, not alone grotesque, hideous, and savage were these rites, but diabolical. For Francis, the Devil and all his hosts of malignant spirits were continually and personally duping and warring upon humanity. Disgusted and heart-heavy at first, he passed soon through paroxysms of downright fear. "That day and the following night our Lord

granted me the supreme grace of feeling and learning by experience and to the uttermost the agonizing and appalling fears which, when God allows it, the enemy can inspire." Francis had his Dark Night, his Gethsemani. He, too, *coepit toedere, et pavere, et moestus esse* - tedium, and fear, and grief. He conquered, and in August, 1549, after many an opportunity (thrust on him by a Captain only too anxious to halt or turn back) of abandoning the voyage, he sailed beneath the volcanoes of Kiusiu, and landed at Kagoshima on the Feast of the Assumption.

Conversions were very slow. Here Francis "fished with the rod, not the net." Still, the Samurai and the Japanese ideal of chivalry enchanted him. He had long talks with the bonzes, who were mostly courteous, sometimes angrily jealous. He considered his Japanese converts his "pets." In September Francis went by way of Yamaguchi to the then Imperial city, Miyako (Kyoto), the "Japanese Versailles." The cold became bitter; the bare footed traveller's flesh was rain-sodden and frost-bitten. At night Francis gave up his bed-coverings to the others. What recurs in the history of this period is the mention of the ridicule the missionaries were subjected to - at least, by the common folk. Elsewhere, abuse, attack; here, mockery. At Miyako his visit was ill-timed. Civil war had reduced the district to destruction. The living idol, the Mikado, passed his fantastic existence hidden in his palace-shrine. He was poverty-stricken, aged, and abandoned. The Shogun, the political generalissimo, was a frightened, helpless boy. The foreign madmen haunted the palace steps, till jeers and stones drove them from the city. In the frozen month of February they returned to Yamaguchi.

Francis changed his tactics. He presented himself to the Governor as Portuguese Ambassador from Goa, and bore presents with him, which were accepted. Japanese records still tell of the clock which "struck exactly twelve times by

day and twelve by night, a musical instrument which played all by itself [it was a sort of spinet], and glasses for the eyes, thanks to which an old man can see as distinctly as a youth." Liberty to preach and be converted was placarded at Yamaguchi. The Samurai listen, the people jeer, the few converts are admirable. Much downright controversy is required. The Creation must be asserted against all Buddhist and other tales of impersonal absorptions and re-emanations of the All. The future life must be put in its true light to the followers of Shinto. Will ancestor-worship prove help or hindrance? Over the moral law the chief difficulties rise. The bonzes are Pharisees, and Xavier penetrates the whited sepulchre.... It is interesting to see Xavier here, and on his visit to Bungo, using the rich stoles, the sandals, the parasol which he decided were necessary to impress the official caste. Directly his back was turned, persecution broke out at Yamaguchi. The missionaries had to hide in a pagoda. Himself, when in November, 1551, Francis left Japan, he had done little or nothing of what he had dreamed. From 1,500 to 2,000 Christians were left behind him. Yet he departed happy and high in hope. Nor was he deceived. These islands have put the most glorious of chapters into Christian history, and no soil has been redder with martyrs blood.

On his return to India he found himself appointed by Ignatius Provincial of the Indies. Till April, 1552, therefore, he occupied himself with domestic politics, which do not interest us. On the whole, all was going well. The Christian native settlements were persevering and increasing. He went "confirming the Churches."

China and Death

"That which I chose, I choose;
That which I willed, I will;
That which I once refused, I still refuse:
O hope deferred, be still.
That which I chose and choose
And will is Jesu's Will:
He hath not lost his life who seems to lose:
hope deferred, hope still."
- *C. Rossetti*

Almost exactly eleven years after Xavier's departure from Lisbon, and ten after his arrival in India, he left Goa for China (about April 25, 1552). He made it clearly understood that his friends were to see his face no more. Notice that China to a Portuguese was a forbidden land.

After shipwreck, epidemic, infinite red-tape and domestic difficulties at Malacca, and down-right persecution from officialdom, at last, in July, Francis left Singapore. In August he arrived at the island of San-Cian, opposite the mouths of the Si-kiang, on which Canton is situated. There Portuguese trading-ships could anchor, but no one would take the responsibility of shipping him across to China. He could see the coast but a few leagues distant. It was drawing his soul into itself. October came. He was still there waiting, and eating his heart out. The hideous tortures of Chinese prisons were rehearsed to him. He saw the effects in a Portuguese prisoner of some of them. Still, he was determined. Into China at all costs he must break. And lo! in this very month, when he before death tasted something of death's agony, was born in Italy the Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, who should, in fact, win through into Beijing. Meanwhile, a slight re current

shivering-fit fatigued him. He took medicine, and was better. From San-Cian the trading-junks begin to sail away. To follow Francis into China are left only a Malabar servant and a Chinese boy. Xavier sends letters home. One week more, and he is sure to be in China. . . . He has bribed a Canton merchant-ship to carry him across. . . . Soon he will be a prisoner at Canton, or possibly in the Siamese Embassy to Beijing. November is come. On the 13th Xavier writes once more: "Shall I reach China? I cannot tell. Everything is against it. . . ." Henceforward the Chinese boy relates the tale minutely. Nearly all the Portuguese were gone. The *Santa Croce*, in which the Saint had come, rode almost solitary at anchor in the bay. On the northern hills, in a straw-thatched hut, Xavier awaited his Canton merchantman, begging a rare crust from the Portuguese who remained on board, and were themselves badly off for food. The 19th, on which date the merchant was due, came, but not the merchant. Two days passed; still he did not come. With the failure of hope, Xavier's strength gave way. He fell sick. In the evening of the 22nd, Xavier thought he would be better on board. Provisions where he was were unobtainable. But it grew suddenly colder. The ship rolled. Francis's temperature rose alarmingly. Next day he returned to shore, finding the ship intolerable. He brought with him a pair of socks, for an appalling headache rendered bare feet a torture. A charitable Portuguese man took him across the bay to his more comfortable hut and bled him. Francis fainted, and on recovery could not eat. On Thursday, the 24th, he was bled again, and fainted once more, and was for a brief space delirious. In his delirium he returned (so it seems almost certain) to his childhood's language, Basque. Yet even so a certain serenity possessed him. Again and again he repeated in Latin: "But do Thou have mercy on my iniquities and my sins "; and " Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me"; and "Mother of God, remember me." All this Thursday and Friday the Saint, having the Name of Jesus

constantly on his lips, spoke little else, and gave no trouble at all. On the Friday the Malabar servant went back to the ship. There no anxiety was displayed. The Captain made him a gift of some almonds, which Francis could not eat.

On Saturday, the 26th, Francis fixed his eyes on the Malabar. "Ah, alas for thee!" he murmured. "Ah, alas for thee! alas for thee! what grief thou causest me!" And thereafter said no more.

The night closed in, and Francis, speechless now, but conscious, lay with his eyes fixed on a Crucifix fastened to a post. The Chinese man had covered him as well as he could, but the sides of the hut were a mere wooden framework; the palm-leaf thatch was in fragments; the wind blew at its will over the dying man, and, setting the flame of the little lamp flaring and flickering, tossed the shadows wildly around the bed, where Francis lay rigid, with his white face and shining eyes fixed open. Through the openings in the hut's side came the ceaseless sound of waves. Beyond, drowned in the darkness, lay the innumerable islands and inlets made by the Si-kiang, and doubly hidden behind them Canton. Across this vision, which the staring eyes of Francis needed no light to see, were stretched the arms of his Crucifix. Muffled in his cloak, the Chinese man crouched beside him to watch the night out.

When a man is drowning, his whole life, they say, files before him in vivid reminiscence. The Chinese man, watching this death, could form no fancy of what Xavier's life had been; but the Saint, offering his life, now finishing, to God, could not but perceive, and once more judge, the lives he so easily might have lived, and had not lived. He saw the grim little castle, undismantled yet, in the brown hills, and the sky tingling with Spanish sunlight, and the children praying in the austere church, romping by the river, and himself

running and leaping. That, of course, could not last, nor had he hoped or wished it should. The scene shifted, and he saw the fantastic architecture of the crowded University colleges at Paris, with high roofs blocking out the sky, and the sudden brawls by taverns, and the hateful laughter of midnight lovers, and the thronged lecture-halls rocking with applause at display of scholastic subtlety of erudition. Paris must have seemed nearer to him than much else in his life, so constantly did his thoughts and words recur to it. True adolescence has its problems of sex and of theology, its ambitious dreams and choices of career, and of these mysteries, so new, so absorbing for a young man's unaccustomed brain, some will endure through life but, even when difficult to deal with, no more as new, unique, unshared. Xavier had made his decision. Marriage he would put aside, and God's law for his body he would obey. To God's revelation he would yield his mind and will, and live as a loyal Catholic. Here had been much renouncement. But self-sacrifice grows by practice; a new perspective forms; God and the soul are realized, not now as topics in theology, but as peremptory realities, demanding immediate and privileged attention. The man who shall alter Xavier's life comes into it, he effects the enormous change, and the whole of Paris, too, is left behind. For Francis, all of that agitated interspace, with its trappings of Italy, its hospitals, its ordination, Rome itself, is Ignatius. For so brief a time really understood, really "in communion"; for so few months to have lived actually under one roof with him for "familiar friend," to have walked with him in the House of the Lord as friends. At this very moment Ignatius was there, thousands of leagues away, through the dark, awake and working, not guessing (it would seem) that his friend had finished the work God had given him to do. Ignatius had been a brief enough space in Francis's actual companionship. He had entered his society, and very soon had left it, and now he in his turn was being left. Between them, and upon one

another, these men had accomplished a vast spiritual work. It was finished, and must be handed on to God. Then followed the year's journey out to India, the Fisheries, Ceylon. A hive of Christian energy would continue there, and he not there. India was far away from Malacca, from the Moluccas, and they themselves were far now, and not to be revisited. Japan appeared to him. Knowing that bulk of achievement counts for nothing, and that to be treated as a fool was the lot of his Master, Christ, whose Name he had hoped to preach there, Xavier could suffer this vision undisturbed. China came next, the huge Empire, more than any place, he had somehow felt, a stronghold whence Satan must be routed. With that ever-alluring, ever-hostile country in his eyes, he was told that this was not for him, that he must fold up the map of seas and continents, and stay at home henceforward.

Even for a Saint, skilled in detachment, it must be a solemn thing to hear that. . . . "That which I have done, do Thou within Thyself make pure." He has done so much, and so little. The more God may through him have done, the more he knows will have been his own blunders and hinderings, the only total to be scored down to his peculiar account. Even gratitude, even joy, even peace, at that moment cannot but be awestruck, solemn, and trusting for forgiveness.

Did Francis know the ultimate agony which God will often ask from the man who has given up one life or many lives for the sake of that life which is meaningless if to work for God be not the supremely best of lives? Did he feel that temptation, which is no assault, as it were, upon the walls and towers of the soul's citadels, but the very withdrawal and crumbling of its foundations, the sick doubt as to whether, after all, not this or that detail of life's plan had been well or ill realized, but whether the whole business had

been right at all, whether the initial choice ought ever to have been thought of, whether God ever asked anything at all of the soul? Whether mortals were meant to introduce all this manner of dream into life's business, and for the dream renounce the ordinary career of men? We cannot tell whether this subtlest of all faith's trials, this falling away of all over the abyss save the supporting Hand of God, was now allowed to Francis. If it were, his martyrdom was indeed fulfilled. Certainly all other comfort was denied him. Perhaps enough, however, had already been endured. He may have been enabled to look at the vision of his life, one long series of deplorable and most tragic errors, unless God and His service were, indeed, the one thing in the world, without that dreadful doubt. Be all that as it may, the faith and hope and love which had sustained him throughout it, sustained him now, whether in peace or in desolation would not matter long.

At two o'clock, when the winds and waters were restless, Francis, too, stirred. The unmistakable change touched his features. The vigilant Chinese man rose, and put a candle into the anxious hand, and held it there. After a brief struggle Francis Xavier died, without priest or Sacrament, attended by one Chinese servant-boy, unwatched save for his silent Crucifix.

The body was buried next day at two in the afternoon of Sunday, November 27, 1552, in a large chest. It had already been let down into the trench they dug for it, when another man suggested the filling of the chest with quicklime. It was brought back to the surface, four sacks of quicklime were emptied into it, and it was once more let down into the grave. On the trampled earth a few stones were placed to mark the spot. The Chinese man, a Portuguese fellow and two other men performed this burial. The others found it too cold to leave their ship or their huts.

But humiliated thus in death by his fellow-men, Death spared him her own humiliations.

The *Santa Croce* was not to sail till February. The Chinese man, indignant that it should leave the body behind, protested. If the quicklime had done its work, the Captain answered, the skeleton might accompany the ship. The chest was disinterred. The body was as pure and fragrant as when it had first been buried. . . . An incision was made: blood flowed. The Captain himself, like the centurion, praised God. In March Malacca was sighted. A skiff carried on the news that Francis was coming home. For all save the official who so savagely withstood the Saint in his lifetime, his return was a triumph. All Malacca venerated the body, carried in procession, and laid in state in the Cathedral. More brilliant of countenance than in life, Francis smiled from his dais on his folk. A grave - too short - was dug near the altar; the bent body was interred coffinless, by Malacca custom, in its vestments, a cushion under the head, a veil over the face. By March, 1553, India had heard of the death. In August it was confirmed. Again in that month the body, still untainted by earth's cruelties, though bruised somewhat by the carelessness of man, was exhumed, and placed in an honourable house previous to its last voyage to India. On December 11 it set sail. In Ceylon, again, the coffin was opened, and again at Batticaloa. Everywhere ecstatic enthusiasm greeted the loved Saint, whose face those populations had never thought to see again. At Goa, Passion Week became high festival. From the little Church of Our Lady of Ribandar children, dancing and garlanded, soldiers, priests, cripples and sick, all the populace of every race and colour, escorted Francis home in a cloud of incense, a rain of falling petals, a tempest of bells and hymns. Not for three days and nights would the frenzied crowds suffer the entombment of the body.

But I am not to tell of the strange history of those relics, nor the continued life of Francis, by power of prayer, in the Church and in the lands he evangelized. I have tried to picture this honourable Basque gentleman whom God made so much more than merely honourable, who controlled his human nature so as to make not only its own natural best of it, in use of body and of brain, but to make it the willing and fit servant of that higher self which God Himself infuses into His elect, and which is the ever fuller incorporation with Christ. The two selves, triumphantly associated, are yet to the end most clearly discernible in their harmony, and now that the eternal crown of approbation has been placed upon the brow of the good and faithful servant, we may still fearlessly picture to ourselves Saint Francis with his clear quick look of alert intelligence, his firm lips, and resolute hands - lips smiling and eyes flashing boyishly as ever, despite the hair gone white.

About This EBook

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